

## Message Text

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63

ACTION OES-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 HEW-06 EB-07 EPA-04 /032 W

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R 170313Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4891

UNCLAS TOKYO 16383

DEPT. PASS TO FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION; ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
AGENCY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SENV, JA

SUBJECT: VINYL CHLORIDE MONOMER

REF: TOKYO 16274

SUMMARY: ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL FINDINGS ON VINYL CHLORIDE  
MONOMER POISONING AND POLLUTION HAVE LED TO ANNOUNCEMENTS BY CENTRAL  
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS OF THEIR READINESS TO TAKE PRECAUTIONARY  
AND REGULATORY ACTIONS TO PREVENT FURTHER CONTAMINATION. END  
OF SUMMARY.

1. A GROUP OF YOKOHAMA NATIONAL UNIVERSITY SCIENTISTS TOOK SAMPLES  
OF AIR AT 35 POINTS AROUND TAKAOKA PLANT OF NIPPON ZEON CO. IN TOYAMA  
PREFECTURE LAST MAY AND EXAMINED THEM BY MASS SPECTROGRAPHY. THEY  
REPORTED DETECTION OF VINYL CHLORIDE MONOMER EVEN IN A SAMPLE TAKEN  
AT A POINT THREE KILOMETERS SOUTHWEST OF THE PLANT. THE HIGHEST  
READING WAS 31.5 PPB OR 0.0315 PPM. ACCORDING TO THIS GROUP, THE  
AMOUNT OF VINYL CHLORIDE MONOMER GAS ANNUALLY DISCHARGED INTO THE  
ATMOSPHERE IS 240 TONS, WHICH IS EQUIVALENT TO 0.3 PER CENT OF  
ANNUAL VINYL CHLORIDE OUTPUT AT THE PLANT. COMPARED WITH 2 PPM  
STANDARD SET FOR VINYL CHLORIDE GAS CONCENTRATION, AIR POLLUTION  
AROUND

TAKAOKA PLANT IS NEGLIGIBLY SMALL. THE GROUP WARNED  
HOWEVER THAT A HIGHER CONCENTRATION MIGHT BE DETECTED DEPENDING  
ON DIRECTION AND VELOCITY OF WIND.

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2. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY DIRECTOR-GENERAL TATSUO OZAWA, QUERIED ON

THIS PROBLEM IN THE DIET BY A SOCIALIST MEMBER, STATED THAT HIS AGENCY WILL UNDERTAKE INVESTIGATION OF AIR POLLUTION BY VINYL CHLORIDE MONOMER IN ALL AREAS AROUND SUCH FACTORIES, WHICH NOW TOTAL 36 IN JAPAN. EA PLANS TO ESTABLISH STANDARD METHOD FOR MEASUREMENT WITHIN THIS YEAR AND BEGIN INVESTIAGATION EARLY NEXT YEAR.

3. TOKYO METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO ENFORCE ITS OWN CONTROLS, SEPARATELY FROM THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, AGAINST POLYVINLY CHLORIDE FOOD CONTAINERS. DECISION CAME AFTER EXAMINATIONS BY THE METROPOLITAN HEALTH RESEARCH INSTITUTE HAD DETECTED MORE THAN 1 PPM OF VINYL CHLORIDE MONOMER DISSOLVED IN FOODS SOLD IN SUCH CONTAINERS. 1 PPM IS CONSIDERED MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE LIMIT FOR VINYL CHOLORIDE MONOMER. MEASURES TO BE TAKEN BY THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT INCLUDE INSTRUCTING CONTAINER MANUFACTURERS AND FOOD SUPPLIERS TO CONDUCT VOLUNTARY EXAMINATION OF THEIR PRODUCTS AND RECALL CONTAINERS AND FOODS FROM WHICH MORE THAN 1 PPM OF VINYL CHLORIDE MONOMER HAS BEEN DETECTED. A RESEARCHER AT THE INSTITUTE HAD DETECTED UP TO 0.2 PPM OF VINYL CHLORIDE MONOMER IN SOY SAUCE AND EDIBLE OIL IN FIVE OF 17 FOOD SAMPLES PLACED ON SALE.

4. EMBASSY IS AIRPOUCHING COPIES OF NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS ON THE SUBJECT FOR TRANSMISSION TO FDA AND EPA.

5. FOR FDA: AS STATED IN REFTTEL, FDA POSITION ON VINYL CHLORIDE POLYMERS IN FOOD PACKAGES HAS BEEN REQUESTED IN A LETTER OF INQUIRIES FROM MR. ICHIKAWA OF THE JAPANESE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WELFARE SENT TO DR. HOWARD R. ROBERTS, DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF FOODS, FDA, ON NOV. 1. AN EARLY REPLY TO HIS LETTER WOULD BE APPRECIATED.  
HODGSON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** SAFETY, STANDARDS, FOODS, CONTAINERS, FOOD PRESERVATION, CHEMICALS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 17 NOV 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975TOKYO16383  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750399-0484  
**From:** TOKYO  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Line Count:** 93  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION OES  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 75 TOKYO 16274  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** izenbei0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 29 SEP 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <29 SEP 2003 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <29 JAN 2004 by izenbei0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** VINYL CHOLRIDE MONOMER  
**TAGS:** SENV, TBIO, JA, US, FDA  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006